DADDY JAKE, THE RUNAWAY.

By Joel Chandler Harris.

Chapter III.

Lucien and Lillian, cuddled together in the bottom of their boat, were soon fast asleep. In dreams of home their loneliness and their troubles were all forgotten. Sometimes in the starlight, sometimes in the dark shadows of the overhanging trees, the boat drifted on. At last, toward morning, it was caught in an eddy and carried nearer the bank, where the current was almost imperceptible. Here the clumsy old bateau rocked and swung, sometimes going lazily forward, and then as lazily floating back again.

As the night faded away into the dim gray of morning, the bushes above the boat were thrust softly aside, and a black face looked down upon the children. Then the black face disappeared as suddenly as it came. After a while it appeared again. It was not an attractive face. In the dim light it seemed to look down on the sleeping children with a leer that was almost hideous. It was the face of a woman. Around her head was a faded red handkerchief, tied in a fantastic fashion, and as much of her dress as could be seen was ragged, dirty, and greasy. She was not pleasant to look upon, but the children slept on unconscious of her presence.

Presently the woman came nearer. On the lower bank a freshet had deposited a great heap of sand, which was now dry and soft. The woman sat down on this, hugging her knees with her arms, and gazed at the sleeping children long and earnestly. Then she looked up and down the river, but nothing was to be seen for the fog that lay on the water. She shook her head and muttered:

"Hit 's pizen down yer fer dem babies. Yit how I gwine git um out er dar?"

She caught hold of the boat, turned it around, and, by means of the chain, drew it partially on the sand-bank. Then she lifted Lillian from the boat, wrapping the quilt closer about the child, carried her up the bank, and laid her beneath the trees where no dew had fallen. Returning, she lifted Lucien and placed him beside his sister. But the change aroused him. He raised himself on his elbow and rubbed his eyes. The negro woman, apparently by force of habit, slipped behind a tree.

"Where am I?" Lucien exclaimed, looking around in something of a fright. He caught sight of the frazzled skirt of the woman's dress. "Who is there behind that tree?" he cried.

"Nobody but me, honey — nobody ner nothin' but po' ole Crazy Sue. Don't be skeerd er me. I ain't nigh ez bad ez I looks ter be."

It was now broad daylight, and Lucien could see that the hideous ugliness of the woman was caused by a burn on the side of her face and neck.

"Was n't I in a boat?"

"Yes, honey; I brung you up yer fer ter keep de fog fum pizenin' you."

"I dreamed the Bad Man had me," said Lucien, shivering at the bare recollection.

"No, honey; 't want nobody ner nothin' but po' ole Crazy Sue. De boat down dar on de sand-bank, an' yo' little sissy layin' dar soun' asleep. Whar in de name er goodness wuz you-all gwine, honey?" asked Crazy Sue, coming nearer.

"We were going down the river hunting for Daddy Jake. He 's a runaway now. I reckon we 'll find him after a while."

"Is you-all Marse Doc. Gaston' chillun?" asked Crazy Sue, with some show of eagerness.

"Why, of course we are," said Lucien.

Crazy Sue's eyes fairly danced with joy. She clasped her hands together and exclaimed:

"Lord, honey, I could shout, — I could des holler and shout; but I ain't gwine do it. You stay right dar by yo' little sissy till I come back; I want ter run an' make somebody feel good. Now, don't you move, honey. Stay right dar."

With that Crazy Sue disappeared in the bushes. Lucien kept very still. In the first place, he was more than half frightened by the strangeness of his surroundings, and, in the second place, he was afraid his little sister would wake and begin to cry. He felt like crying a little himself, for he knew he was many miles from home, and he felt very cold and uncomfortable. Indeed, he felt very lonely and miserable; but just when he was about to cry and call Daddy Jake, he heard voices near him. Crazy Sue came toward him in a half-trot, and behind her — close behind her — was Daddy Jake,

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his face wreathed in smiles and his eyes swimming in tears. Lucien saw him and rushed toward him, and the old man stooped and hugged the boy to his black bosom.

"Why, honey," he exclaimed, "whar de name er goodness you come f'um? Bless you! ef my eyes wuz sore de sight un you would make um well. How you know whar yo' Daddy Jake is?"

"LUCIEN SAW HIM AND RUSHED TOWARD HIM."

"Me and sister started out to hunt you," said Lucien, whimpering a little, now that he had nothing to whimper for, "and I think you are mighty mean to run off and leave us-all at home."

"Now you talkin', honey," said Daddy Jake, laughing in his old fashion. "I boun' I'm de meanes' ole nigger in de Nunited State. Yit, ef I 'd 'a' know'd you wuz gwine ter foller me up so close, I 'd 'a' fotch you wid me, dat I would! An' dar 's little Missy," he exclaimed, leaning over the little girl, "an' she 's a-sleepin' des ez natchul ez ef she wuz in her bed at home. What I tell you-all?" he went on, turning to a group of negroes that had followed him, — Randall, Cupid, Isaiah, and others, — "What I tell you-all? Ain't I done bin' an' gone an' tole you dat deze chillun wuz de out-doin'est chillun on de top-side er de roun' worl'?"

The negroes — runaways all — laughed and looked pleased, and Crazy Sue fairly danced. They made so much fuss that they woke Lillian, and when she saw Daddy Jake she gave one little cry and leaped in his arms. This made Crazy Sue dance again, and she would have kept it up for a long time, but Randall suggested to Daddy Jake that the boat ought to be hauled ashore and hidden in the bushes. Crazy Sue stayed with the children, while the negro men went after the boat. They hauled it up the bank by the chain, and then they lifted and carried it several hundred yards away from the river, and hid it in the thick bushes and grass.

"Now," said Daddy Jake, when they had returned to where they left the children, "we got ter git away f'um yer. Dey ain't no tellin' w'at gwine ter happen. Ef deze yer chillun kin slip up on us dis away w'at kin a grown man do?"

The old man intended this as a joke, but the others took him at his word, and were moving off. "Wait!" he exclaimed. "De chillun bleeze ter go whar I go. Sue, you pick up little Missy dar, an' I 'll play hoss fer dish yer chap."

Crazy Sue lifted Lillian in her arms, Daddy Jake stooped so that Lucien could climb up on his back, and then all took up their march for the middle of Hudson's canebrake. Randall brought up the rear in order, as he said, to "stop up de holes."

It was a narrow, slippery, and winding path in

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which the negroes trod — a path that a white man would have found difficult to follow. It seemed to lead in all directions; but, finally, it stopped on a knoll high and dry above the surrounding swamp. A fire was burning brightly, and the smell of frying meat was in the air. On this knoll the runaway negroes had made their camp, and for safety they could not have selected a better place.

It was not long before Crazy Sue had warmed some breakfast for the children. The negroes had brought the food they found in the boat, and Crazy Sue put some of the biscuits in a tin bucket, hung the bucket on a stick, and held it over the fire. Then she gave them some bacon that had been broiled on a stone, and altogether they made a hearty breakfast.

During the morning most of the negro men stayed in the canebrake, some nodding and some patching their clothes, which were already full of patches. But after dinner, a feast of broiled fish, roasted sweet-potatoes, and ash-cake, they all went away, leaving Crazy Sue to take care of the children. After the men had all gone, the woman sat with her head covered with her arms. She sat thus for a long time. After a while Lucien went to her and put his hand on her shoulder.

"What 's the matter?" he asked.

"Nothin', honey; I wuz des a-settin' yer a-studyin' an' a-studyin'. Lots er times I gits took dat a-way."

"What are you studying about?" said Lucien.

"'Bout folks. I wuz des a-studyin' 'bout folks, an' 'bout how come I whar I is, w'en I oughter be somers else. W'en I set down dis a-way, I gits dat turrified in de min' dat I can't stay on de groun' sca'cely. Look like I want ter rise up in de elements an' fly."

"What made you run away?" Lucien asked with some curiosity.

"Well, you know, honey," said Crazy Sue, after a pause, "my marster ain't nigh ez good ter his niggers ez yo' pa is ter his'n. 'T ain't dat my marster is any mo' strick, but look like hit fret 'im ef he see one er his niggers settin' down anywheres. Well, one time, long time ago, I had two babies, an' dey wuz twins, an' dey wuz des 'bout ez likely little niggers ez you ever did see. De w'ite folks had me at de house doin' de washin' so I could be where I kin nurse de babies. One time I wuz settin' in my house nursin' un um, an' while I settin' dar I went fast ter sleep. How long I sot dar 'sleep, de Lord only knows, but w'en I woked up, marster wuz stan'in' in de do', watchin' me. He ain't say nothin', yit I knowed dat man wuz mad. He des turn on his heel an' walk away. I let you know I put dem babies down an' hustled out er dat house mighty quick.

POOR OLD SUE TELLS HER STORY.

"Well, sir, dat night de foreman come 'roun'

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an' tole me dat I mus' go ter de fiel' de nex' mornin'. Soon ez he say dat, I up an' went ter de big house an' ax marster w'at I gwine do wid de babies ef I went ter de fiel'. He stood an' look at me, he did, an' den he writ a note out er his pocket-book an' tol' me ter han' it ter de overseer. Dat w'at I done dat ve'y night, an' de overseer, he took an' read de note, an' den he up an' say dat I mus' go wid de hoe-han's, way over ter de two-mile place.

"I went, kaze I bleeze ter go; yit all day long, whiles I wuz hoein' I kin year dem babies cryin'. Look like sometimes dey wuz right at me, an' den ag'in look like dey wuz way off yander. I kep' on a-goin' an' I kep' on a-hoein', an' de babies kep' on a-famishin'. Dey des fade away, an' bimeby dey died, bofe un um on de same day. On dat day I had a fit an' fell in de fier, an' dat how come I burnt up so.

"Look like," said the woman, marking on the ground with her bony forefinger —"look like I kin year dem babies cryin' yit, an' dat de reason folks call me Crazy Sue, kaze I kin year um cryin' an' yuther folks can't. I'm mighty glad dey can't, too, kaze it 'ud break der heart."

"Why did n't you come and tell Papa about it?" said Lucien, indignantly.

"Ah, Lord, honey!" exclaimed Crazy Sue, "yo' pa is a mighty good man, an' a mighty good doctor, but he ain't got no medicine w'at could 'a' kyored me an' my marster."

In a little while Daddy Jake put in an appearance, and the children soon forgot Crazy Sue's troubles, and began to think about going home.

"Daddy Jake," said Lucien, "when are you going to take us back home?"

"I want to go right now," said Lillian.

Daddy Jake scratched his head and thought the matter over.

"Dey ain't no use talkin'," said he, "I got ter carry you back an' set you down in sight er de house, but how I gwine do it an' not git kotched? Dat w'at troublin' me."

"Why, Papa ain't mad," said Lucien. "I heard him tell that mean old overseer he had a great mind to take his buggy whip to him for hitting you."

"Ain't dat man dead?" exclaimed Daddy Jake in amazement.

"No, he ain't," said Lucien. "Papa drove him off the place."

"Well, I be blest!" said the old man with a chuckle. "W'at kinder head you reckon dat w'ite man got? — Honey," he went on, growing serious again, "is you *sholy sho* dat man ain't dead?"

"Did n't I see him after you went away? Did n't I hear Papa tell him to go away? Did n't I hear Papa tell Mamma he wished you had broken his neck? Did n't I hear Papa tell Mamma that you were a fool for running away?" Lucien flung these questions at Daddy Jake with an emphasis that left nothing to be desired.

"Well," said Daddy Jake, "dat mus' be so, an' dat bein' de case, we 'll des start in de mornin' an' git home ter supper. We 'll go over yander ter Marse Meredy Ingram's an' borry his carriage an' go home in style. I boun' you, dey 'll all be glad to see us."

Daddy Jake was happy once more. A great burden had been taken from his mind. The other negroes when they came in toward night seemed to be happy, too, because the old man could go back home; and there was not one but would have swapped places with him. Randall was the last to come, and he brought a big fat chicken.

"I wuz comin' 'long cross de woods des now," he said, winking his eye and shaking his head at Daddy Jake, "an', bless gracious, dis chicken flew'd right ih my han'. I say ter myse'f, I did, 'Ole lady, you mus' know we got comp'ny at our house,' an' den I clamped down on 'er, an' yer she is. Now, 'bout dark, I 'll take 'er up yander an' make Marse Ingram's cook fry 'er brown fer deze chillun, an' I 'll make 'er gimme some milk."

Crazy Sue took the chicken, which had already been killed, wet its feathers thoroughly, rolled it around in the hot embers, and then proceeded to pick and clean it.

Randall's programme was carried out to the letter. Mr. Meredith Ingram's cook fried the chicken for him and put in some hot biscuit for good measure, and the milker gave him some fresh milk, which she said would not be missed.

The children had a good supper, and they would have gone to sleep directly afterward, but the thought of going home with Daddy Jake kept them awake. Randall managed to tell Daddy Jake, out of hearing of the children, that Dr. Gaston and some of his negroes had been seen at Ross's mill that morning.

"Well," said Daddy Jake, "I bleeze ter beat marster home. Ef he go back dar widout de chillun, my mistiss 'll drap right dead on de flo'." This was his only comment.

Around the fire the negroes laughed and joked, and told their adventures. Lillian felt comfortable and happy, and as for Lucien, he felt himself a hero. He had found Daddy Jake, and now he was going to carry him back home.

Once when there was a lull in the talk, Lillian asked why the frogs made so much fuss.

"I speck it 's kaze dey er mad wid Mr. Rabbit," said Crazy Sue. "Dey er tryin' der best ter drive 'im outen de swamp."

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"What are they mad with the Rabbit for?" asked Lucien, thinking there might be a story in the explanation.

"Hit 's one er dem ole-time fusses," said Crazy Sue. "Hit 's most too ole ter talk about."

"Don't you know what the fuss was about?" asked Lucien.

"Well," said Crazy Sue, "one time Mr. Rabbit an' Mr. Coon live close ter one anudder in de same neighborhoods. How dey does now, I ain't a-tellin' you; but in dem times dey want no hard feelin's 'twix' um. Dey des went 'long like two ole cronies. Mr. Rabbit, he wuz a fisherman, and Mr. Coon, he wuz a fisherman ——"

"And put 'em in pens," said Lillian, remembering an old rhyme she had heard.

"No, honey, dey ain't no Willium-Come-Trimbletoe in dis. Mr. Rabbit an' Mr. Coon wuz bofe fishermans, but Mr. Rabbit, he kotch fish, an' Mr. Coon, he fished fer frogs. Mr. Rabbit, he had mighty good luck, an' Mr. Coon, he had mighty bad luck. Mr. Rabbit, he got fat an' slick, an' Mr. Coon, he got po' an' sick.

"Hit went on dis a-way tell one day Mr. Coon meet Mr. Rabbit in de big road. Dey shook han's dey did, an' den Mr. Coon, he 'low:

"'Brer Rabbit, whar you git sech a fine chance er fish?'

"Mr. Rabbit laugh an' say: 'I kotch um outen de river, Brer Coon. All I got ter do is ter bait my hook,' sezee.

"Den Mr. Coon shake his head an' 'low: 'Den how come I ain't kin ketch no frogs?'

"Mr. Rabbit sat down in de road an' scratched fer fleas, an' den he 'low: 'Hit 's kaze you done make um all mad, Brer Coon. One time in de dark er de moon, you slipped down ter de branch an' kotch de ole King Frog; an' ever sence dat time, w'enever you er passin' by, you kin year um sing out, fus' one an' den anudder — *Yer he come! Dar he goes! Hit 'im in de eye; hit 'im in de eye! Mash 'im an' smash 'im; mash 'im an' smash 'im!* Yasser, dat w'at dey say. I year um constant, Brer Coon, and dat des w'at dey say.'

"Den Mr. Coon up an' say: 'Ef dat de way dey gwine on, how de name er goodness kin I ketch um, Brer Rabbit? I bleeze ter have sump'n ter eat fer me an' my fambly connection.'

"Mr. Rabbit sorter grin in de cornder er his mouf, an' den he say: 'Well, Brer Coon, bein' ez you bin so sociable 'long wid me, an' ain't never showed yo' toofies w'en I pull yo' tail, I 'll des whirl in an' he'p you out.'

"Mr. Coon, he say: 'Thanky, thanky-do, Brer Rabbit.'

"Mr. Rabbit hung his fish on a tree lim', an' say: 'Now, Brer Coon, you bleeze ter do des like I tell you.'

"Mr. Coon 'lowed dat he would ef de Lord spared 'im.

"Den Mr. Rabbit say: 'Now, Brer Coon, you des rack down yander, an' git on de big san'-bar 'twix' de river and de branch. W'en you git dar you mus' stagger like you sick, an' den you mus' whirl roun' an' roun' an' drap down like you dead. Atter you drap down, you mus' sorter jerk yo' legs once er twice, an' den you mus' lay right still. Ef fly light on yo' nose, let 'im stay dar. Don't move; don't wink yo' eye; don't switch yo' tail. Des lay right dar, an' 't won't be long 'fo' you year fum me. Yit don't you move till I give de word.'

"Mr. Coon, he paced off, he did, an' done des like Mr. Rabbit tol' 'im. He staggered 'roun' on de san'-bank, an' den he drapped down dead. Atter so long a time, Mr. Rabbit come lopin' 'long, an' soon 's he git dar, he squall out, 'Coon dead!' Dis rousted de frogs, an' dey stuck dey heads up fer ter see w'at all de rippit wuz 'bout. One great big green un up an' holler, *W'at de matter? W'at de matter?* He talk like he got a bad col'.

"Mr. Rabbit 'low: 'Coon dead!'

"Frog say: *Don't believe it! Don't believe it!*

"'N'er frog say: *Yes, he is! Yes, he is!* Little bit er one say: *No, he ain't! No, he ain't!*

"Dey kep' on 'sputin' an' 'sputin', tell bimeby hit look like all de frogs in de neighborhoods wuz dar. Mr. Rabbit look like he ain't a-yearin' ner a-keerin' w'at dey do er say. He sot dar in de san' like he gwine in mournin' fer Mr. Coon. De Frogs kep' gittin' closer an' closer. Mr. Coon, he ain't move. W'en a fly 'd git on 'im, Mr. Rabbit, he 'd bresh 'im off.

"Bimeby he 'low: 'Ef you want ter git 'im outen de way, now 's yo' time, Cousin Frogs. Des whirl in an' bury him deep in de san'.'

"Big ole Frog say: *How we gwine ter do it? How we gwine ter do it?*

"Mr. Rabbit 'low: 'Dig de san' out fum under 'im an' let 'im down in de hole.'

"Den de Frogs dey went ter work sho nuff. Dey mus' 'a' bin a hunderd un um, an' dey make dat san' fly, mon. Mr. Coon, he ain't move. De Frogs, dey dig an' scratch in de san' tell atter while dey had a right smart hole, an' Mr. Coon wuz down in dar.

"Bimeby big Frog holler: *Dis deep nuff? Dis deep nuff?*

"Mr. Rabbit 'low: 'Kin you jump out?'

"Big Frog say: *Yes, I kin! Yes, I kin!*

"Mr. Rabbit say: 'Den 't ain't deep nuff.'

"Den de Frogs dey dig an' dey dig, tell, bimeby, big Frog say: *Dis deep nuff? Dis deep nuff?*

"Mr. Rabbit 'low: 'Kin you jump out?'

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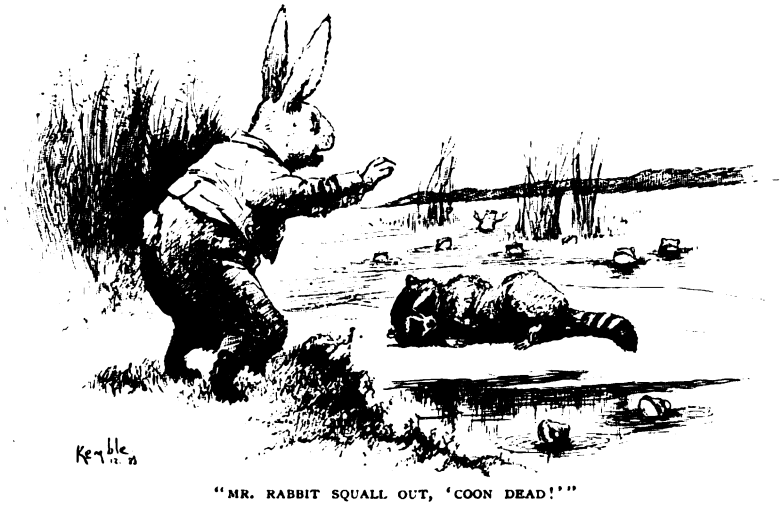
"Big Frog say: *I des kin! I des kin!*
"Mr. Rabbit say: 'Dig it deeper.'



"MR. RABBIT SQUALL OUT, 'COON DEAD!'"

"De Frogs keep on diggin' tell, bimeby, big Frog holler out: *Dis deep nuff? Dis deep nuff?*
"Mr. Rabbit 'low: 'Kin you jump out?'
"Big Frog say: *No, I can't! No, I can't! Come he'p me! Come he'p me!*
"Mr. Rabbit bust out laughin', and holler out:
"'RISE UP, SANDY, AN' GIT YO' MEAT!' an' Mr. Coon riz."

Lucien and Lillian laughed heartily at this queer story, especially the curious imitation of frogs both big and little that Crazy Sue gave. Lucien wanted her to tell more stories, but Daddy Jake said it was bedtime; and the children were soon sound asleep.

The next morning Daddy Jake had them up betimes. Crazy Sue took Lillian in her arms, and Daddy Jake took Lucien on his back. As they had gone into the cane-brake, so they came out. Randall and some of the other negroes wanted to carry Lillian, but Crazy Sue would n't listen to them. She had brought the little girl in, she said, and she was going to carry her out. Daddy Jake, followed by Crazy Sue, went in the direction of Mr. Meredith Ingram's house. It was on a hill, more than a mile from the river, and was in a grove of oak-trees. As they were making their way through a plum orchard, not far from the house, Crazy Sue stopped.

"Brer Jake," she said, "dis is all de fur I 'm gwine. I 'm 'mos' too close ter dat house now. You take dis baby an' let dat little man walk. 'T ain't many steps ter whar you gwine." Crazy Sue wrung Daddy Jake's hand, stooped and kissed the children, and with a "God bless you all!" disappeared in the bushes, and none of the three ever saw her again.

Mr. Meredith Ingram was standing out in his front yard, enjoying a pipe before breakfast. He was talking to himself and laughing when Daddy Jake and the children approached.

"Howdy, Mars' Meredy," said the old negro, taking off his hat and bowing as politely as he could with the child in his arms. Mr. Ingram looked at him through his spectacles and over them.

"Ain't that Gaston's Jake?" he asked, after he had examined the group.

"DEN DE FROGS DEY WENT TER WORK SHO NUFF."

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"Yasser," said Daddy Jake, "an' deze is my marster's little chillun."

Mr. Ingram took his pipe out of his mouth.

"Why, what in the world!—Why, what under the sun!—Well, if this does n't beat—why, what in the nation!"—Mr. Ingram failed to find words to express his surprise.

Daddy Jake, however, made haste to tell Mr. Ingram that the little ones had drifted down the river in a boat, that he had found them, and wished to get them home just as quickly as he could.

"My marster bin huntin' fer um, suh," said the old negro, "and I want ter beat him home, kaze ef he go dar widout deze chillun my mistiss 'll be a dead 'oman—she cert'n'y will, suh."

"Well, well, well!" exclaimed Mr. Ingram. "If this don't beat—why, of course, I 'll send them home. I 'll go with 'em myself. Of course I will. Well, if this does n't—George! hitch up the carriage. Fetch out Ben Bolt and Rob Roy, and go and get your breakfast. Jake, you go and help him, and I 'll take these chaps in the house and warm 'em up. Come on, little ones. We 'll have something to eat and then we 'll go right home to Pappy and Mammy." They went in, Mr. Ingram muttering to himself, "Well, if this does n't beat——"

After breakfast Mr. Ingram, the children, Daddy Jake, and George, the driver, were up and away, as the fox-hunters say. Daddy Jake sat on the driver's seat with George, and urged on the horses. They traveled rapidly, and it is well they did, for when they came in sight of the Gaston place, Daddy Jake saw his master entering the avenue that led to the house. The old negro put his

hands to his mouth and called so loudly that the horses jumped. Dr. Gaston heard him and stopped, and in a minute more had his children in his arms, and that night there was a happy family in the Gaston house. But nobody was any happier than Daddy Jake.

THE END.

A SAD REASON FOR TEARS.

BY EUDORA S. BUMSTEAD.

THERE sat a silly little lass
Upon a bed of posies,
Her tears bedewed the summer grass
And twinkled on the roses.
"Now, why is all this grief?" I said,
"And all this doleful crying?"
The maiden sadly shook her head,
And answered, softly sighing.
"All yesterday I wept," said she,
"And then this morning I could see
'T was quite without a reason;
So now I mourn the stupid way
In which I spent that lovely day—
The fairest of the season!
O dear—O dear—O dear—O dear—
The fairest of the season!"

So there she sat, the silly lass,
And nothing could content her;
The roses and the summer grass
No grain of comfort lent her;
Nor any word that I could say
Would ease her doleful crying.
"I can but weep for yesterday,"
She answered, sadly sighing:
"'T was all so foolish—that I see—
And that is not the worst," said she:
"'T is not my greatest sorrow;
I can not eat—I can not sleep—
And all the day I weep, and weep—
For fear I 'll weep to-morrow!
O dear—O dear—O dear—O dear—
I fear I 'll weep to-morrow!"

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